



George Washington Carver National Monument

VIP Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 1

Winter 2016

*Some day I will have to leave this world. And when that day comes ...
I want to feel that my life has been of some service to my fellow man.*

George Washington Carver, 1917

Editor: VIP
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WELCOME TO THE GWCA VIP NEWSLETTER!

This is the first issue of the quarterly George Washington Carver National Monument (GWCA) Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Newsletter. It's designed to celebrate the contributions of VIPs to park operations, provide information about park news and events, and serve as additional means of communication between park staff and VIPs.

RANGER'S REPORT

The new fiscal year has started and that means the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial has officially begun! Celebrations are underway and will continue through 2016. But before we look forward, let's take a look at the volunteer program for last year:

Huge Increase: With 335 VIPs and nearly 7,100 hours contributed, 2015 saw a dramatic increase in the VIP program. The number of VIPs and volunteer hours grew by about 28% over 2014, and this growth was due in large part to your dedication and service. Thank you! Here are some of last year's special contributions:

Dr. Edward Williamson, a professor on sabbatical from Drury University, spent the winter semester researching, writing, and working in the park, contributing over 550 hours.

Two interns from the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) program each contributed 400 hours. Jerrica Parrish worked with facilities maintenance focusing on safety and environmental management, and Mike Davis worked with visitor services focusing on outreach and publicity.

A morning of service was provided by nearly 60 Upward Bound students from Missouri Southern State University.

On National Public Lands Day, 25 volunteers worked on various projects.

A local alternative school sent classes of teens to the park twice a month during most of the school year.

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RANGER'S REPORT *continued*

VIP Program Expanding for the Centennial: To celebrate the NPS Centennial, the VIP program will be working to engage the next generation of park advocates. The park will host a variety of events and programs for youth, including badge days for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, multi-year programming for the students of Granby Elementary School, service-learning opportunities for students from local colleges and universities, Junior Ranger days during the summer, and invitations for youth to participate in National Public Lands Day, Make a Difference Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, and other special event days.

FEATURED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The continued success of the VIP program is possible only with your help. Please consider how you can contribute – your talent, enthusiasm, and experience are needed! And please let friends and family members know about our volunteer opportunities. We are currently recruiting VIPs for the following jobs and events:

- **Education Program:** Program leaders, once or more a month during fall and spring field trip seasons
- **Art and Essay Contest:** Art show preparers and art judges the week of March 7th and essay judges on March 15th from 4-6 p.m.
- **Centennial Bioblitz:** Citizen scientists, Saturday, May 21st
- **Boy Scouts Merit Badge University:** Badge station assistants, Saturday, May 21st
- **Breeding Bird Survey:** Citizen scientists, a couple of days in May and June

Contact the park rangers for additional information at gwca_interpretation@nps.gov or 417-325-4151.

VIP SPOTLIGHT: HEATHER SOAT – VISITOR GREETER

What do you do just for fun and relaxation?

When I'm not working at the Powers Museum in Carthage, Missouri, I love to go to coffee shops like Starbucks and sit down, relax, drink good coffee, and read a good book.

How long have you been a VIP at GWCA?

I've been a VIP since October of 2014.

Why did you decide to volunteer at GWCA?

I've always loved history and was seeking out advice for how to further my career in history. When I went to visit my friend, George, in Florida, he recommended that I volunteer somewhere to get experience in the history field.

How do park visitors benefit from your volunteer service?

I provide a friendly face when visitors come to the park, answer questions visitors may have, and educate visitors about what the museum includes as well as what they will see on the Carver trail. I have always loved walking the trail here since I was a little girl and love to tell visitors about the inspiration they can find on the trail and from listening to George Carver's message at his bust at the end of the trail.



What is the most important benefit you receive from volunteering at GWCA?

I love being able to give back to the community as well as do something I love – sharing history with visitors of all ages and backgrounds. My love of history actually came from this monument: When I was a little girl, I'd walk the trail and feel like I'd gone back in time when I'd pass the Carver cabin and walk along the bridges.

Please let us know how you would like to receive future newsletters by returning this to George Washington Carver National Monument, 5646 Carver Road, Diamond, MO 64840 or by emailing this information to gwca_interpretation@nps.gov.

Name: _____

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UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AT GWCA

Coffee With Carver: March 17, 10:00 a.m.

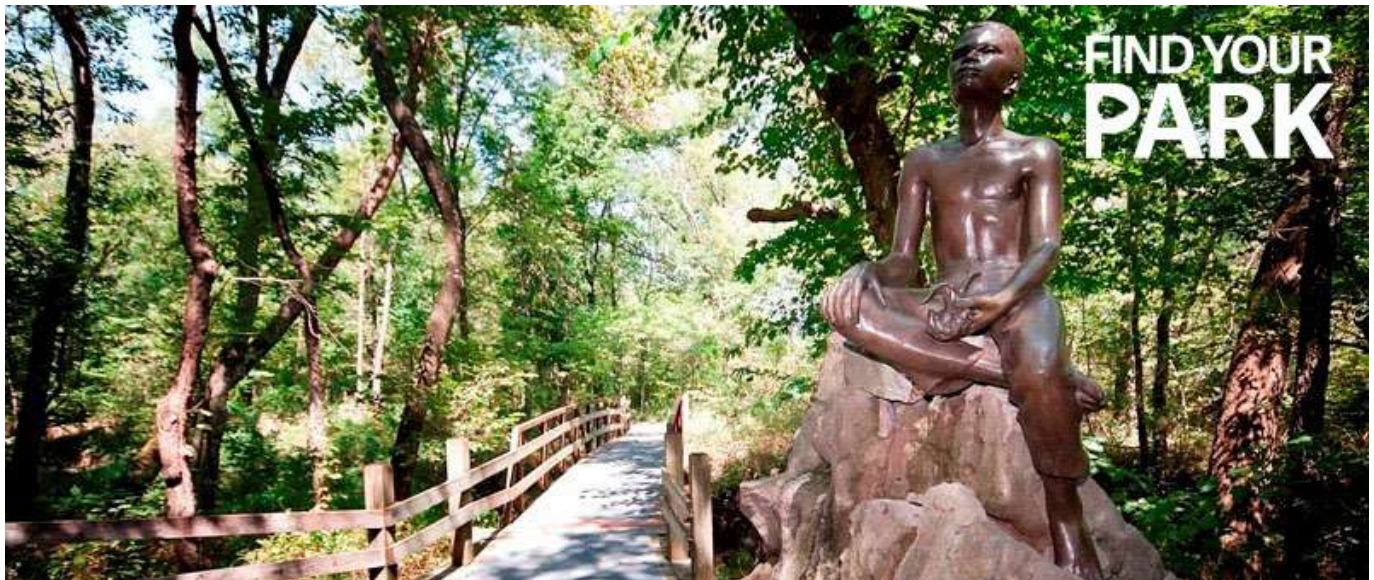
Art and Essay Display: March 21 – April 2

Art and Essay Awards Ceremony: April 2, 2:00 p.m.

National Park Week: April 16-24

Art in the Park: April 23, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Centennial Bioblitz: May 21, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



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